DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 408 045 PS 025 439

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TITLE	Children's Services Report Card, 1996: Measuring Minnesota's Progress for Children. Summary Report.
INSTITUTION	Minnesota Planning, St. Paul.
SPONS AGENCY	Action for Children Commission, St. Paul, MN.
PUB DATE	Nov 96
NOTE	12p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Minnesota Planning, 658 Cedar St., St. Paul, MN 55155; phone: 612-296-3985; world wide web: http://www.mnplan.state.mn.us
PUB TYPE	Numerical/Quantitative Data (110) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Achievement; Adolescents; Birth Weight; Births to Single Women; Child Abuse; Child Health; Child Neglect; *Child Welfare; Children; Comparative Analysis; Counties; Day Care; Delinquency; Demography; Dropout Rate; Early Parenthood; Elementary Secondary Education; Family (Sociological Unit); Infants; Mortality Rate; One Parent Family; Prenatal Care; Runaways; Sexual Abuse; Sexuality; *Social Indicators; Substance Abuse; Suicide; Tables (Data); Volunteers; Youth Problems
IDENTIFIERS	Aid to Families with Dependent Children; Food Assistance Programs; *Indicators; *Minnesota; Out of Home Care

ABSTRACT

This report was developed by Minnesota Planning to help counties measure their progress toward meeting the Minnesota Milestones goals for social and educational services for children. The report card is composed of 21 indicators of children's well-being. Since the 1994 report card was released, Minnesota has made progress in eight areas (1) abused or neglected children; (2) births with no prenatal care; (3) students physically abused or who saw abuse; (4) sexually abused students; (5) family alcohol abuse; (6) sexually active students; (7) students involved in fighting; and (8) children receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children. Negative findings are associated with the following eight indicators: (1) runaways; (2) juvenile apprehensions; (3) children placed out of home; (4) twelfth-grade dropouts; (5) newborns, low birth weight; (6) mothers under 18; (7) students who drink and drive; and (8) students who smoke. There were mixed results for three indicators: (1) student alcohol use; (2) student attempted suicide; and (3) volunteering, and no change for one indicator, infant mortality. Data are currently unavailable for changes in the percentage of children in poverty. Trends between 1994 and 1996 are compared in this summary, and an average composite rank is compiled for each county. In addition, indicators are grouped around common themes for analysis, and the counties with the 10 top and bottom rankings are identified. (AA)

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MN PLANNING

1996 **Children's Services Report Card**

MEASURING MINNESOTA'S PROGRESS FOR CHILDREN

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Summary Report

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The *1996 Children's Services Report Card* is a way for Minnesota to measure its progress for children. The online report card, summarized here, offers easy computer access from Minnesota Planning's World Wide Web site — http://www.mnplan.state.mn.us. Citizens can compare their county on 21 indicators to other counties and the state. The online report card contains county data that spans several years, reflecting trends in children's services. It is part of a larger data collection, DATANET, that contains statistics about social, economic and demographic trends in Minnesota.

The *Children's Services Report Card* was developed by Minnesota Planning to help counties measure their progress toward meeting the *Minnesota Milestones* goals for social and educational services for children. *Minnesota Milestones,* a 30-year plan with 20 goals and 79 indicators, tracks change over five, 10, 20 and 30 years from 1990. The *1996 Children's Services Report Card* and the *Minnesota Milestones: 1996 Progress Report* are the second updates in a publication series begun in 1993.

The report card is composed of 21 indicators or measures of children's well-being. Ten indicators use data from a variety of state and federal sources. The remaining 11 indicators are based on data from the Minnesota Student Survey, administered by the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning.

Trends between the 1994 and 1996 report cards are compared in this summary, and an average composite rank is compiled for each county. In addition, indicators are grouped around common themes for analysis, and the counties with the 10 top and bottom rankings are identified. A complete report card for every indicator and county is available online from Minnesota Planning's World Wide Web site.

Every indicator except the measure of youth volunteers is defined as *positive if it decreased* between the 1994 and 1996 report cards and as *negative if it increased.* The ranking for the number of students who volunteer, however, is *positive if it increased* and *negative if it decreased.*

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Overall Performance

Since the 1994 report card was released, Minnesota has made progress in eight areas. The state has lower rates of physical abuse, welfare recipients and fighting among students. Also dropping are rates of sexual abuse, abuse and neglect, sexually active students, family alcohol abuse and children born without prenatal care.

The eight positive trends are countered by eight negative findings. A greater proportion of students are drinking and driving, smoking and involved with law enforcement. Showing an increase at a slower pace are the rates of runaways, dropouts, children placed out of their homes and mothers younger than age 18. The rate of low birthweight babies also has increased slightly, increasing the chances for chronic health problems. Results were mixed, unchanged or unavailable for the five remaining indicators.

To evaluate progress at the local level, each county was given an average composite rank. The average rank was generated by totaling the rank for each indicator and dividing by 31, reflecting multiple grades in 10 indicators. Counties that consistently ranked at the top of each indicator are at the top of the composite ranking.

Average rankings were not calculated for Aitkin, Chippewa, Cook, Lake, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomen, Pipestone and Traverse counties because their numbers in the Student Survey were too small to report or the county and school district were about the same size.

When all indicators are considered together, the counties with the top composite rankings are clustered in west-central Minnesota — Lac Qui Parle, Stevens, Waseca, Stearns and Pope — while those at the bottom are in the north-central part of the state — Cass, Becker, Hubbard, Pine and Beltrami. Faribault and Watonwan counties were the only southern counties with composite rankings among the bottom 10.

Of the Twin Cities counties, Ramsey County's composite ranked near the bottom finishing 69th out of 79 counties.

1996 Compared to 1994

Positive trends for eight indicators		***1994 Report Card***	***1996 Report Card***
Abused and neglected children per 1,000 children		9.26 (1992)	8.61 (1994)
Percentage of births to mothers who received little or no prenatal care		3.40% (1992)	2.90% (1994)
Percentage of students who were physically abused or saw abuse	9th grade 12th grade	20.67% 18.25 (1992)	18.01% 13.90 (1995)
Percentage of students who were sexually abused	9th grade 12th grade	9.72% 11.69 (1992)	8.64% 9.50 (1995)
Percentage of students who said there was alcohol abuse in their family	9th grade 12th grade	18.03% 19.99 (1992)	15.30% 14.60 (1995)
Percentage of students who said they were sexually active	9th grade 12th grade	27.99% 60.62 (1992)	26.40% 54.80 (1995)
Percentage of students who said they had been involved in fighting	9th grade 12th grade	44.64% 30.29 (1992)	39.10% 22.50 (1995)
Rate per 1,000 children receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children		106.40 (1992)	88.83 (1995)

Negative trends for eight indicators		***1994 Report Card***	***1996 Report Card***
Runaways per 1,000 children		10.10 (1993)	11.10 (1994)
Juvenile apprehensions per 1,000 children		36.71 (1991)	51.39 (1994)
Children placed out of home per 1,000 children		14.94 (1992)	15.25 (1993)
Percentage of 12th-grade dropouts		6.56% (1992)	6.93% (1993)
Percentage of newborns with low birthweights		5.20% (1992)	5.70% (1994)
Percentage of mothers less than age 18		2.90% (1992)	3.10% (1994)
Percentage of students who said they drink and drive	9th grade 12th grade	3.74% 30.39 (1992)	11.50% 49.00 (1995)
Percentage of students who said they smoke	9th grade 12th grade	12.35% 22.43 (1992)	17.50% 25.99 (1995)

Mixed results for three indicators		***1994 Report Card***	***1996 Report Card***
Percentage of students who said they used alcohol	9th grade 12th grade	18.65% 41.29 (1992)	20.10% 37.00 (1995)
Percentage of students who said they attempted suicide	9th grade 12th grade	12.78% 12.90 (1992)	14.00% 12.00 (1995)
Percentage of students who said they do volunteer work	9th grade 12th grade	29.52% 28.77 (1992)	26.70% 30.30 (1995)

No change for one indicator	***1994 Report Card***	***1996 Report Card***
Average infant mortality per 1,000 live births	7.00 (1992)	7.00 (1994)

Data currently unavailable for one indicator	***1994 Report Card***	***1996 Report Card***
Percentage of children in poverty	12.40% (1989)	Available after 2000

Average County Ranking

These composites average each county's ranking for 21 indicators. Counties that consistently rank at the top of each indicator have a high composite. The county composites are listed from top to bottom beginning with those that have better results for children.

Average rankings for 79 Minnesota counties are mapped in three groups, representing the top 25 percent, middle 50 percent, and bottom 25 percent of the state. Eight counties are not ranked because their numbers were too small to be reported on about half of the indicators or the county and school district were about the same.

	Composite
Lac Qui Parle	1 — 59.6
Stevens	2 — 56.0
Waseca	3 — 55.9
Stearns	4 — 55.4
Pope	5 — 55.0
Murray	6 — 54.6
Sibley	7 — 52.4
Wabasha	8 — 52.0
Benton	9 — 51.1
Marshall	10 — 50.9
Fillmore	11 — 50.7
Cottonwood	12 — 49.9
Swift	13 — 49.4
Red Lake	14 — 49.3
Rock	15 — 48.9
Renville	16 — 48.7
Lincoln	17 — 48.5
Meeker	18 — 47.2
Grant	18 — 47.2
Kittson	20 — 47.0
Todd	21 — 46.9
Martin	22 — 46.6
Washington	23 — 45.7
Lyon	24 — 45.6
Nobles	24 — 45.6
Houston	26 — 44.8
Carver	27 — 44.7
Dakota	28 — 44.5
Scott	29 — 44.3
Dodge	30 — 44.1
Big Stone	31 — 44.0
Olmsted	31 — 44.0
Winona	33 — 43.0
Douglas	34 — 42.5
Mower	35 — 42.3
Clay	35 — 42.3
Goodhue	37 — 42.2
Redwood	37 — 42.2
Brown	39 — 41.2
Wadena	39 — 41.2
Blue Earth	41 — 41.0
Wright	42 — 40.8
Morrison	43 — 40.0
Chisago	44 — 39.8
Clearwater	45 — 38.7
Polk	45 — 38.7

	Composite
Freeborn	47 — 38.5
Hennepin	48 — 37.6
McLeod	49 — 37.5
Sherburne	50 — 37.4
Jackson	51 — 37.2
Norman	52 — 37.0
Mille Lacs	53 — 36.9
Le Sueur	54 — 36.8
Otter Tail	55 — 36.5
Roseau	56 — 35.5
Wilkin	56 — 35.5

	Composite
Koochiching	58 — 35.4
Nicollet	59 — 34.6
Rice	60 — 34.1
Yellow Medicine	60 — 34.1
Carlton	62 — 33.8
Anoka	63 — 33.5
Kanabec	63 — 33.5
Steele	65 — 33.0
Kandiyohi	66 — 32.6
Faribault	67 — 32.2
Crow Wing	68 — 31.8

	Composite
Ramsey	69 — 31.7
Pennington	70 — 31.3
St. Louis	71 — 31.1
Isanti	72 — 30.7
Watonwan	73 — 30.1
Itasca	73 — 30.1
Beltrami	75 — 27.8
Pine	76 — 27.4
Hubbard	77 — 25.7
Becker	78 — 25.3
Cass	79 — 15.6

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State Results by Indicator

The 21 indicators in the *Children's Services Report Card* are grouped around common themes and state progress is tracked. The 10 top and bottom county ranks are listed here for 12 of the 21 indicators. The top counties have the lowest rates and show better results for children than counties at the bottom.

Complete county rankings and maps for each indicator can be obtained from Minnesota Planning's World Wide Web site — http://www.mnplan.state.mn.us — or by contacting the agency.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Minnesota appears to be reducing child abuse and neglect across the state. Three of the four indicators measuring child abuse and neglect showed declines: the percentage of students who were victims of or saw physical abuse, the percentage who were victims of sexual abuse, and the number of reports of abused and neglected children. The number of children in out-of-home placement increased — from 18,096 to 18,673 — for a rate of 14.94 per 1,000 children in 1992 to 15.25 in 1993.

The rate of verified reports of abused and neglected children dropped nearly 7 percent between 1992 and 1994. In 1992 there were 11,217 verified reports of abused and neglected children while in 1994 the number dropped to 10,434. These numbers translate to a rate decrease of 9.26 to 8.61 per 1,000 children.

Rates of verified reports of abused and neglected children per 1,000 children, 1994

Top		*Bottom*	
Jackson	1.25	Beltrami	16.49
Itasca	1.43	Crow Wing	14.85
Meeker	1.44	McLeod	14.82
Murray	1.52	Swift	14.76
Stevens	1.59	Polk	14.15
Pine	1.75	Blue Earth	13.80
Houston	2.40	Cass	13.78
Roseau	2.46	Hennepin	13.56
Pennington	2.47	Douglas	13.03
Clearwater	2.51	Becker	12.58

Source: Minnesota Department of Human Services

Children in Poverty

Two indicators measure the level of poverty among children: the percentage of children in poverty, which is unavailable until after the 2000 Census, and the rate of children who receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children. While the rate of children receiving AFDC dropped by almost 18 percent between 1992 and 1995, not every child who is eligible for AFDC receives aid. Thus this second indicator may underestimate the number of children in poverty. Among the seven metropolitan counties, Ramsey ranked second from the bottom with a rate of 195 per 1,000. Hennepin ranked ninth from the bottom with a rate of 129.6 per 1,000 children on AFDC in 1995. Counties with the lowest rate of children on AFDC include Lac Qui Parle, Carver and Sherburne.

Rate of children on AFDC per 1,000 in the population, 1995

Top		*Bottom*	
Lac Qui Parle	20.41	Beltrami	237.40
Carver	24.83	Ramsey	195.00
Sherburne	25.77	Mahnomen	180.00
Lake of the Woods	25.88	Cass	175.80
Roseau	26.08	Clay	158.40
Murray	29.06	Aitkin	140.70
Scott	31.13	Polk	137.70
Wabasha	31.79	Clearwater	133.10
Lincoln	32.51	Hennepin	129.60
Goodhue	32.65	Becker	118.00

Source: Minnesota Department of Human Services

Alcohol and Tobacco Use

Two of the four indicators measuring change in the use of alcohol and tobacco showed negative trends, while one was positive and one was mixed. Between 1992 and 1995, the rate of ninth- and 12th-graders who drive after drinking or using drugs rose almost 8 percentage points for ninth-graders and nearly 19 points for 12th-graders. By contrast, the percentage of ninth- and 12th-graders who reported family alcohol abuse declined.

The indicator recording change in the percentage of ninth- and 12th-grade students who use alcohol monthly or weekly showed mixed trends: a marked decrease was reported among 12th-graders — from 41.29 percent to 37 percent — but an increase from 18.65 percent to 20.10 percent was found among ninth-graders.

The 1992 Student Survey data about students' use of tobacco was adjusted to match the 1995 Student Survey, and the indicator about the percentage of students who smoke "daily" changed to "weekly." This 1995 indicator was negative for both ninth- and 12th-grade students, with the percentage of ninth-graders who smoked at least weekly rising from 12.35 to 17.50 and that of 12th-graders climbing from 22.43 to 25.99. In 14 counties, one-third of all 12th-graders smoked weekly.

Percentage of students who used alcohol about monthly and weekly, 1995

9th-Grade Top		*9th-Grade Bottom*	
Cottonwood	7.70	Red Lake	32.70
Murray	11.20	Big Stone	32.10
Waseca	11.20	Morrison	31.90
Sibley	11.40	Norman	29.00
Lincoln	13.50	Cass	28.20
Lac Qui Parle	13.70	Le Sueur	27.80
Wadena	14.00	Pennington	26.40
Wabasha	14.80	Beltrami	25.90
Fillmore	15.10	Roseau	25.70
Pope	15.70	Yellow Medicine	25.60

12th-Grade Top		*12th-Grade Bottom*	
Goodhue	28.60	Wilkin	60.30
Olmsted	29.70	Red Lake	60.00
Sherburne	30.20	Houston	54.80
Redwood	30.60	Yellow Medicine	52.10
Polk	30.80	Lincoln	51.90
Cass	31.40	Pennington	50.00
Isanti	31.60	Big Stone	49.50
Murray	32.30	Mower	48.80
Ramsey	32.70	Watowan	48.60
Rock	32.70	McLeod	48.60

Source: Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning

Percentage of 12th-grade students who smoked weekly, 1995

Top		*Bottom*	
Aitkin	4.40	Steele	38.20
Lac Qui Parle	11.00	Norman	36.50
Mille Lacs	18.90	Yellow Medicine	35.90
Goodhue	19.10	Big Stone	35.10
Polk	19.40	Watonwan	35.00
Swift	19.60	Wilkin	33.60
Redwood	19.80	Kandiyohi	31.70
Pennington	20.00	Carver	31.40
Murray	20.40	Carlton	31.10
Olmsted	20.50	Houston	31.10

Source: Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning

Education

The 12th-grade dropout rate is growing. The percentage of 12th-graders who should be in school but have not attended for the past year rose from 6.56 to 6.93 between school years 1991-92 and 1993-94; the actual number of these students increased significantly from 3,400 to 3,759. Two metropolitan counties, Ramsey and Washington, were ranked among the bottom in this indicator.

Percentage of students who should be in the 12th grade but are not, 1993

Top		*Bottom*	
Grant	0	Mahnomen	17.80
Murray	0	Douglas	16.45
Norman	0	Ramsey	13.62
Rock	0	Isanti	13.28
Traverse	0	Cass	10.73
Stevens	0.70	Chisago	10.54
Pope	0.81	Kanabec	9.68
Clearwater	0.87	Crow Wing	9.64
Benton	1.03	Washington	9.53
Red Lake	1.03	Kandiyohi	9.34

Source: Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning

Health

The four indicators of children's health showed mixed results. On the positive side, fewer children were born without prenatal care. Among the negative trends were more children born with low birthweight. There was no change in the infant mortality rate. Twelfth-graders were less likely to attempt suicide, countered by ninth-graders who were more likely.

In 1994, the percentage of newborns with low birthweight increased from 5.20 percent of all live births in 1992 to 5.70 percent in 1994. Children weighing less than 5.5 pounds at birth are more likely than other infants to die in their first year.

Statewide, the average infant mortality rate from the 1994 and 1996 report cards remained at seven per 1,000 live births; the number of mortalities dropped 3.5 percent, from 1,452 to 1,401.

The rate of mothers who had not seen a doctor before their seventh month or at anytime during their pregnancy dropped from 3.40 percent in 1992 to 2.90 percent in 1994. Five counties — Cook, Pipestone, Lake of the Woods, Rock and Swift — showed positive results and reported no births to mothers who had not seen a doctor before their seventh month of pregnancy. Nine counties reported 1 percent or less.

Mixed trends were found in the percentages of ninth- and 12th-grade students who have ever attempted suicide. The rate worsened for ninth-graders; it rose from 12.78 percent in 1992 to 14 percent in 1995. It fell slightly for 12th-graders, from 12.90 percent to 12 percent.

Average infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births, 1994

Top		*Bottom*	
Jackson	0	Wadena	18
Lake of the Woods	0	Hubbard	17
Marshall	0	Mahnomen	17
Traverse	0	Renville	15
Benton	1	Beltrami	12
Dodge	1	Crow Wing	12
Mille Lacs	1	Kittson	12
Redwood	2	Pennington	12
Sibley	2	Big Stone	11
Douglas	3	Carlton	11
Lake	3	Rock	11
Meeker	3		
Pope	3		
Waseca	3		

Source: Minnesota Department of Health

Percentage of births to mothers who had not seen a doctor before their seventh month of pregnancy, 1994

Top		*Bottom*	
Cook	0	Watonwan	8.10
Pipestone	0	Beltrami	6.80
Lake of the Woods	0	Red Lake	6.30
Rock	0	Clearwater	6.30
Swift	0	Mill Lacs	5.60
Benton	0.60	Pine	5.10
Douglas	0.60	Ramsey	4.90
Chisago	0.80	Marshall	4.50
Houston	0.90	Pennington	4.30
Carver	1.00	Koochiching	4.10
Norman	1.00		
Renville	1.00		
Stearns	1.00		
Washington	1.00		

Source: Minnesota Department of Health

Negative Behavior

Two of the three indicators of negative behavior were moving in the wrong direction. The rates rose for juvenile apprehensions and children running away from home. At the same time, however, the rate fell for students fighting.

The total number of juvenile apprehensions climbed 45 percent, from 43,758 in 1991 to 63,499 in 1994. Conversely, four counties reported no apprehensions — Lincoln, Murray, Norman and Rock — while Fillmore and Mahnomen posted a rate of less than one per 1,000 children.

Respondents to the Student Survey reported significantly less involvement in fighting — from 44.64 percent to 39.10 percent for ninth-graders and from 30.29 percent to 22.50 percent for 12th-graders.

More children are running away from home, based on the latest information. The state rate increased from 10.10 runaways per 1,000 children in 1993 to 11.10 in 1994. Counties with the highest rate tend to be rural, although two of the metropolitan counties, Anoka and Ramsey, were among the bottom 10 in runaways per 1,000 children. Four counties reported no runaways: Cook, Kittson, Red Lake and Marshall.

Rate of juvenile apprehensions per 1,000 juveniles in the population, 1994

Top		*Bottom*	
Lincoln	0.00	Wilkin	139.62
Murray	0.00	Winona	94.12
Norman	0.00	Koochiching	87.77
Rock	0.00	Pennington	81.23
Fillmore	0.52	Kandiyohi	74.74
Mahnomen	0.63	Freeborn	74.10
Lake of the Woods	1.67	Clay	72.81
Kittson	3.37	Ramsey	66.44
Red Lake	3.72	Hennepin	65.64
Waseca	4.17	Redwood	65.62

Source: Bureau of Criminal Apprehension

Rate of runaways per 1,000 children, 1994

Top		*Bottom*	
Cook	0.00	Beltrami	24.47
Kittson	0.00	Mower	22.14
Marshall	0.00	Crow Wing	21.88
Red Lake	0.00	Rice	18.28
Lac Qui Parle	0.43	Mahnomen	18.13
Watonwan	0.56	Clay	17.37
Big Stone	0.64	Kandiyohi	15.28
Todd	0.70	Anoka	15.20
Murray	0.76	St. Louis	14.77
Pipestone	1.02	Ramsey	14.59

Source: Bureau of Criminal Apprehension

Sexual Behavior

The two measurements of sexual behavior — the percentage of students who report they are sexually active and the percentage of births to mothers younger than age 18 — registered mixed trends.

While the percentage of ninth-graders who were sexually active fell slightly from 27.99 in 1992 to 26.40 in 1995, that of 12th-graders dropped almost six points, 60.6 percent to 54.8 percent. Cass County students reported the highest rate of sexual activity for both ninth- and 12th-graders. Three of the seven metropolitan counties were among the 10 counties with the most sexually active ninth-graders: Anoka, Ramsey and Washington.

At the same time, the number and percentage of births to mothers younger than age 18 rose. In 1994, there were 1,998 births compared with 1,911 in 1992, and the rate increased to 3.10 percent from 2.90 percent. Four counties — Big Stone, Grant, Red Lake and Traverse — reported no births to teenage mothers in 1994.

Percentage of sexually active students, 1995

9th-Grade Top		*9th-Grade Bottom*	
Stevens	10.30	Cass	49.20
Lincoln	13.60	Itasca	42.30
Swift	14.20	Carlton	39.80
Wadena	14.90	Pennington	35.60
Kittson	15.50	Anoka	34.40
Sibley	15.90	Kanabec	31.80
Martin	16.40	Big Stone	31.30
Benton	16.60	Ramsey	30.40
Renville	16.60	St. Louis	30.10
Waseca	16.60	Washington	30.00

12th-Grade Top		*12th-Grade Bottom*	
Lac Qui Parle	39.20	Cass	72.50
Rock	40.40	Hubbard	71.60
Marshall	41.60	Koochiching	67.00
Douglas	42.80	Red Lake	65.20
Lincoln	43.30	Itasca	64.30
Stevens	44.20	Faribault	64.10
Renville	44.40	Nicollet	63.90
Swift	44.90	Steele	63.20
Stearns	46.00	Carlton	63.00
Polk	48.10	Watonwan	62.70

Source: Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning

Percentage of births to teen mothers, 1994

Top		*Bottom*	
Big Stone	0.00	Cass	8.80
Grant	0.00	Lake	7.60
Red Lake	0.00	Mahnomen	6.60
Traverse	0.00	Beltrami	5.50
Carver	0.90	Cook	5.50
Pipestone	0.90	Norman	5.20
Murray	1.10	Wadena	5.20
Stevens	1.10	Clearwater	6.30
Lac Qui Parle	1.20	Watonwan	6.20
Pennington	1.20	Freeborn	5.70
		Mower	5.70

Source: Minnesota Department of Health

Volunteering

The trends were mixed for this indicator. While the percentage of ninth-grade students who volunteered at least one hour-a-week decreased to 26.70 percent from 29.52 percent between 1992 and 1995, the percentage of 12th-grade volunteers improved from 28.77 percent to 30.30 percent during the same period.

Percentage of ninth-grade students who reported they do volunteer work or community service one or more hours a week, 1995

Top		*Bottom*	
Lincoln	36.00	Norman	10.10
Mower	35.90	Marshall	14.30
Murray	35.70	Wadena	16.20
Stearns	35.70	Nicollet	17.00
Pipestone	35.00	Dodge	18.10
Freeborn	34.70	Kandiyohi	18.30
Lac Qui Parle	33.30	Itasca	18.60
Redwood	32.60	Nobles	19.00
Pope	32.20	Kittson	19.10
Lyon	32.20	Isanti	19.30

Source: Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning

Upcoming Revisions to the Report Card

The indicators in the *Children's Services Report Card* will undergo extensive review in 1997 as part of the planned revision of *Minnesota Milestones*, the state's long-range planning effort initiated by Governor Arne H. Carlson in 1991. *Minnesota Milestones* consists of 20 goals and 79 milestones or indicators of progress.

The review of *Minnesota Milestones* and *Children's Services Report Card* will seek the help of experts and citizens and may include public meetings around the state as well as a survey. The goal is to gather better data to measure children's well-being in Minnesota.

In many communities the report card is used for measuring results, setting priorities and mobilizing support on behalf of children and families. The report card has helped the state and local communities identify and document priorities and evaluate progress over time. Also, family services collaboratives, using the report card as a tool, have been formed around the state to plan and restructure the way services are provided to children and families.

Future report card summaries are planned to be released every three years to coincide with the Student Survey. Online data will be updated continuously as soon as new numbers become available.

Definitions

The children's services report card can help communities monitor how well they are doing. Data for the state and counties provide a yardstick against which a community can compare itself. As more years of data become available, communities will be able to track trends over time.

The 21 children's indicators selected for the children's services report card cover children from birth to age 18. While each indicator describes one aspect of children's well-being or quality of life, together they can show what progress has been made for Minnesota's children and families.

Changes from year to year should be noted, but may be small in relation to the overall numbers. The causes of the changes also need to be examined. For example, if a county's number of abused children is higher than that of most other counties, the reason may be that its residents are careful to report problems; on the other hand, it also may mean a serious problem exists. Indicators are just the first step in deciding whether there is a problem, how big it is and what to do about it. All rates are based on 1992 juvenile population estimate from the U.S. Census and Minnesota Planning.

Children in poverty: number and percentage of children whose annual family cash income was below the federal poverty line. This indicator is drawn from the 1990 census, which uses 1989 income data. For more information on census data, call the Census Help Desk at Minnesota Planning, (612) 296-2557. For a 1994 report on trends in child poverty, call Minnesota Planning at (612) 296-3985.

Children on AFDC: rate per thousand children and average number of children whose parents received monthly Aid to Families with Dependent Children benefits. This indicator of child poverty is more up-to-date than the census data, but not all poor children get welfare benefits; thus, this number is smaller than the total number of poor children. Rate per 1,000 is based on a juvenile population estimate. For more information, call the Minnesota Department of Human Services at (612) 296-7474 or the county human services department.

Runaways: rate for every 1,000 children and number of children reported to police for running away from home. Children who run away often have serious problems in their family and sometimes are victims of abuse. For more information, call the Criminal Justice Helpline at Minnesota Planning, (612) 296-4852, or the local law enforcement agency.

Juvenile apprehensions: number and rate per 1,000 children under age 18 who were apprehended by police during a year. Each apprehension of a juvenile is counted. Policies on juvenile apprehension vary by county. Rate is based on a juvenile population estimate. For more information, call the Criminal Justice Helpline at Minnesota Planning, (612) 296-4852, or the local law enforcement agency.

Abused or neglected children: number and rate per 1,000 children physically, sexually or emotionally abused or neglected, as reported to police or welfare authorities. Only verified reports of abuse are included in this data. Rate is based on a juvenile population estimate. For more

information, call the Minnesota Department of Human Services at (612) 296-6117 or the county human services department.

Children placed out of home: number and rate per 1,000 children removed from their home by welfare authorities, typically because they were abused or neglected. These children usually are placed in a foster home. Rate is based on a juvenile population estimate. For more information, call the Minnesota Department of Human Services at (612) 296-6117.

12th-grade dropouts: number and county's percentage of students who should be in the 12th grade but have not attended school for a year. For more information, call the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning's District Data Unit at (612) 296-2400.

Infant mortality: number of deaths and average rate of children younger than age 1 who died over a three year period. Data on rates by race is available for the state as a whole and some cities. For more information, call the Minnesota Department of Health at (612) 623-5353; data for Minneapolis and St. Paul is available from respective city health departments.

Newborns, low birth weight: number and percentage of children whose weight at birth was less than 5 pounds, 8 ounces (2,500 grams). These children are more at risk of dying or having health problems. For more information, call the Minnesota Department of Health at (612) 623-5353.

Births, no prenatal care: number and percentage of newborns whose mother had not seen a doctor before her seventh month or at any time during her pregnancy. A child whose mother does not receive prenatal care is more likely to have health problems. For more information, call the Minnesota Department of Health at (612) 623-5353.

Births, mother under 18: number and percentage of newborns whose mothers are under age 18. These children and their families are more likely to have health, social and financial problems. For more information, call the Minnesota Department of Health at (612) 623-5353.

The following indicators are adapted from the Minnesota Student Survey, which is given to sixth-, ninth- and 12th-grade students every three years by the Minnesota Department of Education. The survey asks more than 100 questions, but the results of only a few are reported here. In addition, the indicators report only the results from ninth- and 12th-graders in the most recent survey. State percentages are included for comparison. Survey data is not available for Aitkin, Chippewa, Cook, Lake, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomen, Pipestone and Traverse counties. This data is suppressed to protect student privacy because each county has only one school district or the sample size was too small. For more information on the survey and these indicators, call the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning at (612) 296-9010.

Drinking and driving: percentage of students who answered "Yes, but rarely" or "Yes, often" to the question, "Do you drive after you've been drinking or using drugs?" Other possible responses were "No," "I don't drink or use drugs" and "I don't drive."

Used alcohol: percentage of students who said they used alcohol about monthly, weekly or daily. Not included are students who said they have never used alcohol or used it less often than monthly.

Attempted suicide: percentage of students who answered, "Yes, during the past year" or "Yes, more than a year ago" to the question, "Have you ever tried to kill yourself?"

Physically abused or saw abuse: percentage of students who answered "Yes" to either of two questions: "Has any adult in your household ever hit you so hard or so often that you had marks or were afraid of that person?" or "Has anyone in your family ever hit anyone else in the family so hard or so often that they had marks or were afraid of that person?"

Sexually abused: percentage of students who answered "Yes" to either of these two questions: "Has any adult or older person outside the family ever touched you sexually against your wishes or forced you to touch them sexually?" or "Has any older or stronger member of your family ever touched you sexually or had you touch them sexually?"

Family alcohol abuse: percentage of students who answered "Yes" to the question, "Has alcohol use by any family member repeatedly caused family, health, job or legal problems?"

Sexually active: percentage of students who answered, "Yes, once or twice" or "Yes, three times or more" to the question, "Have you ever had sexual intercourse (gone all the way)?"

Smoking: percentage of students who reported that they use cigarettes weekly.

Fighting: percentage of students who reported one or more instances in response to the question, "During the last 12 months, how often have you hit or beat up another person?"

Volunteering: percentage of students who reported that they do "volunteer work or community service" one or more hours a week in answer to the question, "During the school year, how many hours in a typical week do you spend doing each of the following?"

Technical Notes

Indicator rates per 1,000 children (population age 18 and younger) were created for five of the report card's indicators: children on AFDC, runaways, juvenile apprehensions, abused and neglected, and placed out-of-home. Currently, the U.S. Census Bureau is the only source of population estimates by age.

The Census Bureau releases yearly population estimates in two way. First, state-level population estimates are released in the age-one category, which was the data set used to create statewide rates for the report card. Second, the Census Bureau releases annual county-level population estimates in five age categories. The county-level data does not include a category for people younger than age 18, so a methodology was created to extract that population.

The 1992 county-level estimate for the population younger than age 18 was used for both the 1994 and 1996 report cards. Statewide rates used the most current data available from the Bureau of the Census. The latest statewide estimates from the Census Bureau for Minnesota's population under age 18 are: 1,211,572 (1992), 1,224,766 (1993), 1,235,541 (1994), and 1,245,492 (1995).

Infant mortality numbers and rates have been updated. The 1994 report card reported the number of infant deaths for each county. With the assistance of the Minnesota Department of Health's Center for Health Statistics, the infant mortality count is now being reported as a three-year total, starting with 1991. That is, the number of infant deaths from the original report card will now reflect the total number of infant deaths from 1991, 1992 and 1993. The 1996 report card uses the years 1992, 1993 and 1994. A three-year total creates a trend, better reflecting the number of infant deaths occurring in a county.

This method was also used to calculate the infant mortality rate, which is the average number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births. The method is referred to as a death cohort approach, which counts deaths and births from the same time period.

Three-year total number of infant deaths = (number of infant deaths in 1991 + number of infant deaths in 1992 + number of infant deaths in 1993).

Average number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births = (number of infant deaths in 1991 + number of infant deaths in 1992 + number of infant deaths in 1993) divided by (number of live births in 1991 + number of live births in 1992 + number of live births in 1993), then multiply by 1,000.

MINNESOTA PLANNING is charged with developing a long-range plan for the state, stimulating public participation in Minnesota's future and coordinating activities with state agencies, the Legislature and other units of government.

The *Children's Services Report Card* was prepared by Richard Fong at Minnesota Planning's Land Management Information Center.

Upon request, the *1996 Children's Services Report Card* will be made available in an alternate format, such Braille, large print or audio tape. For TTY, contact Minnesota Relay Service at (800) 627-3529 and ask for Minnesota Planning.

November 1996

For more information, paper or electronic copies of the *1996 Children's Services Report Card*, contact Minnesota Planning or its World Wide Web site:

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